



PRESS RELEASE

Justice Department Announces Civil Rights Investigation into Conditions at Tennessee's Trousdale Turner Correctional Center

Tuesday, August 20, 2024

For Immediate Release

Office of Public Affairs

The Justice Department announced today that it has opened an investigation into the conditions at Trousdale Turner Correctional Center, a Tennessee Department of Correction facility operated by the private correctional management company CoreCivic. Trousdale Turner, located approximately an hour outside of Nashville, is Tennessee's largest correctional facility.

Based on an extensive review of publicly available information and information gathered from stakeholders, the department has found significant justification to open this investigation, including state audits that have flagged dangerous understaffing and safety concerns since Trousdale Turner first opened in 2016. The investigation will examine whether Tennessee protects those incarcerated at Trousdale Turner from harm, including physical violence and sexual abuse.

"People are incarcerated at Trousdale Turner as punishment for their crimes, but in our legal system, punishment does not and cannot include violence and sexual abuse," said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "The Justice Department is launching this comprehensive investigation to determine if there are systemic constitutional violations regarding the treatment of people in this privately-run correctional

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facility. We are committed to protecting the constitutional rights of people held inside jails and prisons across our country.”

“Publicly available information suggests that Trousdale Turner has been plagued by serious problems since it first opened its doors,” said United States Attorney Henry C. Leventis. “This includes reports of staffing shortages, physical and sexual assaults, murders, and a 188% turnover rate among prison guards just last year. Although CoreCivic owns and operates Trousdale, the State of Tennessee is ultimately responsible for the safety of the people incarcerated there. This investigation seeks to determine whether Tennessee is meeting its constitutional obligations.”

The Justice Department notified State officials of the investigation earlier today and pledged that the department will work cooperatively with them in conducting the investigation and identifying solutions to any problems that are uncovered.

The department has not reached any conclusions regarding the allegations in this matter. The investigation will be conducted under the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act. This statute gives the department the authority to investigate systemic violations of the rights of individuals in institutional settings, including prisons.

The Civil Rights Division’s Special Litigation Section is conducting this investigation jointly with the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Middle District of Tennessee. Individuals with relevant information are encouraged to contact the department via phone at 888-392-7031 or by email at community.trousdaleturner@usdoj.gov.

Additional information about the Civil Rights Division’s work regarding correctional facilities is available on its website at www.justice.gov/crt/rights-persons-confined-jails-and-prisons.

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Topic

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